

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

15 MAY 2024

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF SCRUTINY BOARD

Scrutiny Board brings together the Chairs of the six thematic overview and scrutiny committees at the Council and the Older Peoples', Young People's and Climate Change Champions. It provides an opportunity for a whole council view of scrutiny activity, which avoids gaps and overlaps and helps establish a lead committee for areas of joint interest. It also provides a forum in which the key performance issues for the Council can be reviewed and items for further scrutiny identified.

The scrutiny function was created to act as a check on and balance to the executive and it is a statutory requirement for all authorities operating executive arrangements. There has been one meeting of Scrutiny Board since my last statement to Council.

The meeting of Scrutiny Board on 16 February 2024 focussed upon the scrutiny of the Executive Q3 Performance and Finance Management Report, ahead of the members of the Board attending the meeting of the Executive at 11am on Tuesday 20 February 2024. Some of the issues raised at the Executive meeting by members of the Scrutiny Board are highlighted below:

- The increased cost of providing care home placements, the factors driving these increases and what the Council can do in response
- The long-term impact of using reablement capacity to provide domiciliary care
- The role that the Council has in supporting care homes at risk of closure due to financial pressures
- What is behind the increase in suspensions and permanent exclusions from schools and whether the apparent issues with behaviour in schools are a legacy of the pandemic and/or are impacted by some other factors. The role that the Council has in supporting schools where there are concerns about pupil behaviour and class disruption
- The underlying causes of the relatively high, persistent absence rates in secondary schools
- The progress that has been made with the integration of 7 different waste collection authorities, what has been learned and whether best practice has been applied
- The response to reported street lighting faults and what more can be done to speed this up
- What is driving the increase in gym membership and leisure centre membership and is this something that could be built upon, helping to achieve public health outcomes.

Updates were also provided by the Climate Change Champion, the Older People's Champion and the Young People's Champion on key elements of their work over the past 3 months. The themes covered by the updates included:

- Access to housing and transport, which remain key issues for older people and the various networks and groups in which they are involved
- The work that could be done on the development of age friendly places in shops and businesses and also encouraging services to consider how they could be made more age friendly
- The level of support given to unaccompanied asylum seekers and whether they are enabled to occupy their time positively/constructively

- Road safely outside some schools where there are multiple car drop-offs and collections at the beginning and end of the school day
- The Local Plan and the links with climate change mitigation work.

Members of Scrutiny Board also held a discussion about how the work of the overview and scrutiny committees and the Area Constituency Committees could be better co-ordinated so that mutually supportive work on service performance and policy and strategy development could be undertaken. A recent example of the benefits of a co-ordinated approach is the scrutiny of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision in the Scarborough and Whitby Area.

Scrutiny Board also considered the role that the overview and scrutiny committees had to play in the scrutiny of housing, specifically: 1) scrutiny of housing provision as an engine to improvement in health and wellbeing; economic development; and educational outcomes; 2) oversight of the performance of the Council as a housing provider, based upon key performance indicators set by Government.

Members of Scrutiny Board are next due meet at 10am on 24 May 2024. At that meeting, the Executive Q4 Performance and Finance Management Report will be scrutinised.

COUNCILLOR KARIN SEDGWICK

7 May 2024